

Bomb Lawyer Seeks to Show Big Conspiracy

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Lawyers for Terry L. Nichols today called more witnesses to suggest that other conspirators were involved in the Oklahoma City bombing.

Mr. Nichols is on trial on charges of murder and conspiracy in the bombing of the Federal Building on April 19, 1995, which killed 168 people. Timothy J. McVeigh has been convicted on identical charges and sentenced to death.

Two witnesses from Herington, Kan., where Mr. Nichols was living at the time of the bombing, testified today that on April 10, 11, and 12, 1995, they saw a large Ryder truck at Geary State Fishing Lake, north of Herington, in the same spot where prosecutors say Mr. McVeigh and Mr. Nichols built the bomb in a Ryder truck on April 18. On the earlier days, Mr. McVeigh was in Arizona.

James L. Sergent, said he saw the truck at the lake on April 10, 11 and 12.

Georgia Rucker testified that she saw the truck at the lake on the same days and on April 18. Their testimony was supposed to hint that more than two people took part in building the bomb.

Lawyers for Mr. Nichols also called witnesses today to challenge the credibility of Roger E. Moore, an Arkansas gun collector, who testified about an armed robbery of his home on Nov. 5, 1994. Prosecutors say the robbery financed the bombing conspiracy. Guns belonging to Mr. Moore were found at Mr. Nichols's home.

One witness, Larry Hethcox, testified that Mr. Moore described to him a robbery that was more extensive than he had described to the police. But in cross-examination by Jamie Orenstein, a prosecutor, Mr. Hethcox acknowledged that the serial number of a gun found in Mr. Nichols's house was that of one he had sold to Mr. Moore.

The defense strategy brought an angry response today from Marsha Kight, the mother of Frankie Ann Merrell, who was 22 when she was killed in the bombing. Ms. Kight issued a written statement demanding that Mr. Nichols take the stand.

Michael E. Tigar, the lead lawyer for Mr. Nichols, said no decision had been made as to whether Mr. Nichols would testify, but he emphasized that his client had no duty to take the stand.